

Message Text

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SUBJECT: TUNISIAN REQUEST TO DELAY START OF 1978 AMERICAN
SCHOOLS OF ORIENTAL RESEARCH (ASOR) PUNIC EXCAVATIONS

1. AWARE KEEN INTEREST AMBASSADOR MULCAHY IN OFFICIAL
U. S. CONTRIBUTION CARTHAGE ARCHEOLOGY, SMITHSONIAN
REQUESTING SPECIAL EMBASSY HELP IN PROBLEM PUNIC EXCA-
VATION. BESCHAOUCH, DIRECTOR INSTITUTE ARCHEOLOGY AND ARTS,
REQUESTED WEEK OF MARCH 13 DELAY START PUNIC EXCAVATIONS
FROM APRIL 1 AT LEAST UNTIL MAY 1 FOR SEASON SCHEDULED
END JUNE 4. REQUEST MADE VERBALLY THROUGH ASOR SECRETARY
DARGOUTH IN KHERREDINE OFFICE. REASON GIVEN IS CONFLICT

OF MISE EN VALEUR WORK AT SITE IN AREA ONCE KNOWN AS KELSEY
CONCESSION. IN REQUESTING DELAY, BESCHAOUCH OFFICE
CONFIRMED RECENT DECISION OF COUNCIL UNDER CARTHAGE CURATOR
ENNABLI, TO PERMIT STAGER OPEN TWO NEW SQUARES TO WEST OF
LAST SEASONS EXCAVATIONS IN "KELSEY CONCESSION."
THESE TWO NEW SQUARES ARE DEEMED CRITICAL BY SMITHSONIAN
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AND ASOR FOR FIRM ESTABLISHMENT OF CHRONOLOGY TENTATIVELY
DEVELOPED ON BASIS STRATIGRAPHY IN PUNIC PORT AREA AND LAST
YEAR'S "KELSEY CONCESSION" EXCAVATIONS. NEW SQUARES WILL

ALSO TIE ASOR EXCAVATIONS INTO 1925 EXCAVATIONS IN ORIGINAL
KELSEY CONCESSION UNDER DONALD HARDIN. SOME 1978 PUNIC
EXCAVATION PLANNED FOR PORT AREA BUT CRITICAL ARCHEOLOGICAL

PROBLEM FOR THIS SEASON IS THAT DESCRIBED ABOVE IN
"KELSEY CONCESSION."

2. EMBASSY ASSISTANCE AVOID DELAY PUNIC EXCAVATION WOULD
BE GREATLY APPRECIATED AND IS INDEED BELIEVED CRITICAL
BECAUSE THIS SEASON IS THE FINAL EXCAVATION SEASON FOR
WHICH FUNDING IS ASSURED FOR BOTH THE PUNIC AND THE CLASSICAL
ASOR SITES. AS STATED ABOVE, PUNIC EXCAVATION
SCHEDULED APRIL 1 THROUGH JUNE 4 WHEN CLASSICAL TEAM DUE
TAKE OVER KHERREDINE QUARTERS AND EXCAVATION EQUIPMENT.
RAMADAN, AUGUST 5, WILL EFFECTIVELY END THIS YEAR'S FIELD
WORK BY CUTTING OFF LOCAL LABOR SUPPLY. ADDITIONAL
INFORMATION AVAILABLE FROM SAM WOLFF, PUNIC TEAM MEMBER
AND ASOR FELLOW CURRENTLY RESIDENT TUNIS.

3. POSSIBLY MORE INVOLVED THAN MEETS THE EYE IN
REQUESTED DELAY THIS CRITICAL SEASON PUNIC EXCAVATION.
MISE EN VALEUR WORK IN KELSEY CONCESSION PROCEEDED SMOOTHLY
LAST SEASON SIDE-BY-SIDE WITH EXCAVATION. CERTAINLY
MISE EN VALEUR WOULD NOT BE ATTEMPTED AT PRECISE LOCATION
WHERE THIS YEAR'S EXCAVATION WOULD UNDO THE BEAUTIFICATION
OF THE SITE.

4. QUESTION IN STAGER'S MIND IS THAT INVOLVING FRENCH
"TOPHET" CONCESSION WHICH SEEMS ALWAYS TO HAVE WORRIED
BESCHAOUCH IN DISCUSSIONS OF ASOR ACCESS TO "TOPHET"
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AREA. TOPHET IS NAME ATTACHED TO 1920'S FRENCH CONCESSION
WEST OF KELSEY CONCESSION. FRENCH EXCAVATIONS WERE NEVER
PUBLISHED AND TUNISIANS UNDERSTOOD TO HAVE GIVEN THE FRENCH
UNTIL APRIL 1, 1976 TO RETURN TO TUNISIA THE
DOCUMENTATION ON THEIR EXCAVATIONS. WHEN NONE RETURNED,

TUNISIANS PERMITTED STAGER TO BEGIN EXCAVATIONS IN 1976 IN
"KELSEY CONCESSION" STRICTLY TO THE EAST OF "TOPHET"
MONUMENTS ACTUALLY LOCATED IN KELSEY CONCESSION. TWO NEW
SQUARES ARE ALSO STRICTLY TO THE EAST OF THESE
MONUMENTS. ASOR JUNE 1977 ACCORD TO EXCAVATE IN "KELSEY
CONCESSION" PERMITTED WORK IN AREA BETWEEN TOPHET MONUMENTS
AND RECTANGULAR HARBOR." THIS 1977 LANGUAGE MORE SPECIFIC
THAN 1976 PROTOCOL PERMITTING EXCAVATION "IN TOPHET."
FEAR IS THAT BESCHAOUCH MAY NOW BE RESTRICTING STAGER'S
WORK UNDER PRESSURE FROM FRENCH. ALTHOUGH HE HAS CONFIRMED
PERMISSION TO EXTEND 1978 DIG WITHIN THE AREA APPROVED
IN 1977, HE IS IN FACT DENYING TIME ESSENTIAL TO
COMPLETE KELSEY CONCESSION WORK.

5. STAGER NEEDS AT LEAST A SPECIFIC DATE FROM BESCHAOUCH
WHEN KELSEY AREA EXCAVATIONS CAN BEGIN. THIS WILL AT

LEAST PERMIT STAGER TO DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT TO START

THIS YEAR AT ALL. PLANNED 1978 EXCAVATION IN PORT AREA
IS OF SECONDARY IMPORTANCE AND ALONE WOULD NOT JUSTIFY
FIELDING TEAM SINCE FUNDS ADEQUATE ONLY FOR FINAL FIELD
SEASON AND PUBLICATION.

6. SMITHSONIAN AND ASOR WOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR EMBASSY
ASSISTANCE PERMITTING START PUNIC EXCAVATION WITHOUT
DELAY. ADVANCE PARTY HAS ALREADY DELAYED DEPARTURE ONE
WEEK.
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